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that the child is a girl and let him alone, for it is boys that they really try to get hold of.

Hair from the first cutting should never be thoughtlessly thrown out on the ground. The best thing to do is to wrap it in a small piece of cloth and take it to the Nerbudda River where it is thrown in as an offering. No special trip to the river is required and the hair may be kept in the house until some convenient season or until some friend or relative happens to be going that way. The belief that magic may be worked with hair is prevalent in India, but Kols do not seem to fear this danger, nor do they believe that another may work harm by possessing it. [826] [754]

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First Feeding: *Pasni*. Most Kols attach considerable importance to the child's first feeding with solid food. This should be done when the child is about six months old. One group said that the feeding should be done at five months in the case of a girl and six months for a boy. This indicates Hindu influences. [177]

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The family invites as many of the child's relatives as they can afford to feed for a general feast following the ceremony. The child is to be fed with sweetened *khir*—rice boiled in milk—which has been specially prepared for this occasion. A portion of *khir* is placed in a small cup made from the leaves of the mango tree (*Mangifera indica*). As the ceremony begins, the friends and relatives wash their hands with water specially brought for them; the child's teeth, if in, are cleaned by being lightly brushed with a mango twig. The person who breaks the child's "fast", and this may be one of a number of relatives, among whom we find mentioned the name of the father, mother and father's sister (*phuphu*), first dips the index finger of the right hand into the *khir* and brings a portion up to the child's mouth but does not actually touch its lips, for the finger is immediately withdrawn. This movement is made six times, but on the seventh occasion the finger is put into the child's mouth and with it a bit of the *khir* is inserted. Others present follow in the same way until all have fed the infant. Each one who thus feeds the child is supposed to drop into a dish beside it some money, the amount varying according to circumstances: it ought not to be less than four pice and may be as much as eight annas. The money thus collected is used to buy silver bangles for the child. [515] [602]

Sometimes the child is fed with a silver coin rather than by the plain finger. This may be an influence of Hinduism. One group said the silver coin must be either a four or eight anna piece. The coin used is dipped into the *khir* and the baby fed on the seventh approach as in the above description. The *phuphu* receives the coins by which

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857 853 862 574 the child is fed and the money is used to buy an ornament. When groups using the finger were asked about using the coin, they said that it should not be done as the coin was not clean. Another group used a mango leaf instead of the finger. In Rewa State one group stated that just before the feeding of the child the mother should take it before the household deity, naming Bhanmati in this case, and bowing down before her ask the *devi* to protect the child, the household, and the children yet to come.

304 [326] NOSE AND EAR PIERCING. The piercing of the nose and ears is usually done by a *sonar* (goldsmith), although Kols may do it themselves. The hole is generally made by simply forcing the ends of the ring through the lobe in the ear, but for the nose a bronze instrument is used. As far as could be ascertained no ceremony is performed at the time nor does the *sonar* repeat any *mantras*. The best time to have piercing done is at the time of some large *mela* (religious gathering) in the vicinity, for then there are plenty of *sonars* on hand awaiting work. [757] When the nose is pierced a small plug of wood is first inserted, but the earrings are allowed from the beginning. The wound has onion and [465] turmeric rubbed into it, which help it to heal. The *sonar* is given a seer of rice, some chillis and a little salt, or may be paid four pice for the piercing and paid extra for the rings according to their value. It has already been noted that the Kathautiyas use woodpith to enlarge the holes in their ears and as a result their lobes have larger holes. [301] Kols about Jubbulpore claimed that in Rewa every Kol woman should have a ring of gold and silver on her ears or nose. Our observations however did not confirm this claim.

789 [30] 824 Earrings help to protect the child from evil. Other things as well ward off evil influences and we found that the *reiha* nut (*Sapindus mukorossi*) and half a *ghata* nut (*Ziziphyus xylopyrus* (?)) are put into a strip of cloth, tied in a knot and worn round the neck. This is considered a good protection from *nazar*, the evil eye, but it does not help in the case of *bhuts*. Black bangles on the wrists and a white *pot* (dah) [776] just in front of the ears also protect from the evil eye. A copper ring may be put on one of the ankles for any evil spirit attacking the child will become imprisoned in this. Good spirits live in amulets about the neck and drive off *bhuts*. [826] At other times a piece of a broken or discarded human tooth, tied on a string about the wrist, is considered an effective protection. A strip of coloured cloth, red and yellow being preferred, may also be tied somewhere about the child's person. These are some of the measures which may be taken to protect the young child during the early months and years of life. Other instances

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of charms used are discussed in the chapter on Magic and Witchcraft.

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PUBERTY. From the above mentioned ceremonies until the Kol child reaches puberty, there is little of importance to note. When the first milk tooth falls out the child is told to take it outside near the house, to shut his eyes and to throw it on the roof, never looking to see where it has gone. This will aid in the coming in of the new tooth.

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The girl is tattooed when between the ages of ten and twelve and just before her marriage may be given further tattooing. In the Kaimur hills it was said that a woman must be tattooed, for without it Bhagawan would not know how to grasp her and take her spirit on its way to the heavens. No ceremonies occur at the time of tattooing, and apart from saying that it is the custom Kols could give us almost no information on the matter. The designs are usually similar to those of their Hindu neighbours and the actual tattooing is done by the same man who does it for other castes. See the description on pages 28-31.

[775] [171 531]

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No particular rites are observed in connection with the girl's first menstruation. At such a time she is asked to stay in the house and if there is a second room into which she can go she retires there. She is not put out into a menstruation hut as is common among some Munda tribes. During the four to six days that the menses last she is considered unclean and should not cook, bring water for the family, nor touch men's clothes. When the menses have ceased she has to go to the village shrine and offer a cocoanut.

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Nowhere among the Kols were we able to find any definite trace of puberty rites which are common elsewhere. We were told that a boy of the Kol tribe could only be considered a Kol when he reached the age of twelve to thirteen. In the full sense he becomes of age when he is sixteen. A girl is considered to be of age when she goes to live for good in the house of her husband. No traces were discovered of any ordeal that either sex had to undergo; no scars are made on the body nor were any hair tying ceremonies observed among the groups studied.

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Bachelors' Quarters. No trace was found of bachelors' quarters nor of segregated dormitories for boys and girls, which are well-known among the Mundas and allied tribes of Chota Nagpur. The Gonds of Bastar and elsewhere also have them. They have been considered as a place for sex instruction but the system has been widely criticised by the more advanced Mundas and is being abandoned in many places. Other writers have attributed no social or religious importance to these quarters. One writes: "The thing is that the poor people in a village cannot afford to build big houses for themselves containing

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585 (wedding crown) is removed. He then turns to his bride and takes off a portion of the *sari* covering her head and sees her features for the first time. She immediately covers her head again. This is [788] repeated seven times but after the seventh he does not again remove the covering, and it is said that henceforth her head is to remain covered to the day of her death if he outlives her, and to the day of his death if she becomes a widow. A *sari* cloth is now brought and is [554] wrapped about the boy and girl; in the seclusion of this the boy puts 386 some *sendur*, with the little finger of his right hand, on the girl's forehead indicating that she is now a married woman. The first three [826] fingers should on no account be used. The Brahmin now takes his leave, for his work is done, and he is paid a fee usually amounting to Rs. 1-4-0.

585 The boy soon comes out of the house and greets his friends and 574 tells his party that it is time for them to retire to the *janmasa*. Before they are allowed to depart, however, they are invited to a feast close to the *marhwa*. Their feet are again washed and a feast, as lavish as can be managed, is given them. At least the following should be [262 provided: rice, pulse, *bara*, *puris*, curds, spices and sweets. Some- 273 times there is drinking but the Kols are not much addicted to this. The bridegroom begins the feast by taking the first mouthful; then the others may start. Usually they eat seated in a circle on the ground and are entertained at the time by singing and dancing. The bridegroom is paid four annas for starting things off and the rest of the night is spent in this manner.

(c) *Bida* (or *bidai*): The Return of the Bridegroom to his House. The returning party leaves the girl's village on the third day. About noon on that day there is another feast, the final one, which is only for [607] the members of the departing company, except that the bridegroom's [606] *sar* (brother-in-law) also eats with them. The groom refuses to eat until his mother-in-law promises him a gift such as a goat or a cow. The bridegroom is also presented with the gifts which were made to the couple and these are handed over to his *swasa* to keep for him. The men of both parties embrace and put a *tika* of *sendur* on one another, each man waving a pice over the head of another and then presenting it to him. *Ilachi* (cardamom), *pan* and *supari* are distributed.

585 The women now appear in a group and the mother-in-law puts lamp black under the eyes of the boy's father and also sprinkles a bit of *haldi* water over him. The other women do the same to the remaining members of the bridegroom's party. A bit of lac on a string is sometimes tied about their necks. The boy's father drops a rupee into

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of the *Sath Bhai*, and thinking this to be their boon, the Kols returned home. They took it that Bhagawan had given them the gift of musical expression, and from that time they became adept at the beating of drums and singing, for which they are famous all over India. 537 773

THE DOMESTICATION OF ANIMALS. After the creation of the earth Bhagawan peopled it with all kinds of animals. But the problem was, which one of them should be put to the plough in order that the ground might be tilled? First he tried the elephant, but he was too big and could not turn about in the field, and in addition he trampled down the ploughed earth. So he tried the camel next but it was not satisfactory either. Finally he created the oxen and tried them in the plough; they were just right and with them Bhagawan succeeded in turning up the soil. Then Bhagawan gave the cattle a gentle and kind nature so that man might have them with him and use the oxen to till the land. Thus they were domesticated. 539 773 231

WHERE AGRICULTURE STARTED. In the beginning certain peoples were created by Bhagawan specifically for the purpose of farming. These were the Kurmis, Lodhis, Kols and Gonds. It was with these groups that agriculture first started. But there are others who maintain that all people were of the jungle and that Bhagawan gave to them first the cattle which he had created; therefore they left living off fruits and roots and began to grow crops. 539 773 241

WHY WE HAVE A LITTLE FINGER. There is a story among Kols, that in the distant past when the Pandus and the Kurus fought in Hindustan, Shahadeo Pandu desired to see for himself just how one might become possessed of Shardamai. So he thought he would try an experiment. He brought before the goddess a cocoanut, some *sendur*, *ghi* and fire, and began to make a *hom* offering. As he was doing this, he suddenly became possessed of the *devi* and his fourth finger happened to rest in the *hom* fire. Being in the state of unconsciousness due to the *bans* he did not notice this fact, and the tip of the finger began slowly to burn away. Ever since, man has had a little finger for it was shortened in the *hom* fire. 539 773 826

THE COMING OF DISEASES. There were once seven sisters in heaven, who were sent from there to the earth to live among men. As they left Bhagawan, they asked him for boons, for, they said, unless they had power of some kind no one would respect them nor would men worship them. It happened that each was granted a boon. 539 773 753